



Fort Vancouver

EMIGRANT TRAILS HALL OF FAME

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION



John McLoughlin

Biography

- Born: Jean-Baptiste McLoughlin, 1784, Riviere-du-Loup, Quebec
- Died: 1857, Oregon City, Oregon Territory
- Married: Marguerite Wadin McKay

Achievements

- Father of Oregon
- Chief Factor, Fort Vancouver, WA
- Aided emigrants to Oregon Territory before boundary was settled
- Licensed to practice medicine in 1803

The Pacific Northwest was in turmoil in the 1840s. The Hudson's Bay Company claimed the entire area. They built Fort Vancouver on the banks of the Columbia River, run by Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin. Anti-British feelings in the United States were best described by the term Manifest Destiny, describing the belief that the United States was destined to expand from coast to coast. American pioneer settlers arrived on the Oregon Trail. The earliest pioneers landed at Fort Vancouver. McLoughlin had been told by his superiors that under no circumstances was he to give them aid or comfort.

When these early pioneers arrived at Vancouver, they were exhausted. McLoughlin could not knowingly cause them harm. Instead, he provided them with supplies, on his personal credit, from the fort's warehouses.

Numerous Oregon Trail diaries say McLoughlin saved the lives of many American pioneers, even though it was against his company's orders. Under pressure from the company, McLoughlin made the decision to retire and build in Oregon City. He built the largest house in Oregon City. His house became the social center of the area.

In 1948 the McLoughlin House was named a National Historic Site. In 1953, a statue of McLoughlin was placed in United States Capitol Statuary Hall. In 1957, McLoughlin was named by the Oregon Legislature as the "Father of Oregon." Today, many Oregon landmarks, from schools, streets, neighborhoods, and even a mountain are named for him. These are appropriate acknowledgments of Dr. McLoughlin's actions for saving many pioneers and helping bring former HBC land into United States territory.